GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4195
ANSWERED ON:11.08.2016
Exploration and Mining in Seabed
Senguttuvan Shri Balasubramaniam

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether sanction has been obtained from the International Seabed Authority to explore for mineral deposits off the Mauritian coast in the Indian Ocean, if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether any precious metal such as gold has been detected in the undersea deposits of polymetallic sulphides of the coast of Mauritius, if so, the details thereof;
(c) the approximate quantity of polymetallic sulphides deposits available in the Indian Ocean off Mauritian coast for India to mine; and
(d) whether the said activity is likely to be economically viable to exploit the same, if so, the details thereof?

Answer

(a): As per United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which has been ratified by 167 State Parties including India and Mauritius, the exclusive rights of exploration of ocean mineral resources off the coast of a State upto 200 nautical miles (Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)) lies with the concerned State. The International Seabed Authority's jurisdiction is beyond the EEZ. However, International Seabed Authority has approved India's application for exploration of polymetallic sulphides at a site of 10000 sq km along Central Indian Ridge & South Western Indian Ridge in Indian Ocean. Exploration for polymetallic sulphides has not yet started.

(b) to (d): Does not arise.